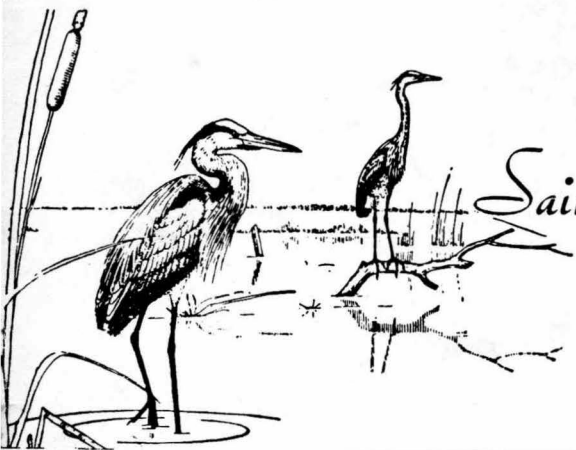




Saint Louis Audubon

Bulletin

April, 1960

Vol. 28, No. 3

A First: Fran William Hall Presents Puerto Rico, U. S. A., on Award Night

Thursday, April 28

Third Baptist Church, Grand and Washington, 8:15 p.m.

The first natural history color film ever made about the great commonwealth of Puerto Rico, this Audubon Screen Tour by Fran William Hall is a spectacular tour of the "Island of Perpetual Spring".

From the floor of the Caribbean to mountain-top rain forests, this island is one of extreme contrasts. A short distance from San Juan is a landscape little changed from the days of Christopher Columbus where country folk harvest sugar cane by hand and transport it by oxcart to the markets. Underwater among the coral reefs, Mr. Hall found a wildlife treasure, along the shore he photographed the primitive giant iguana lizards, huge hermit crabs scaling trees, native birds and strange insects. In El Yunque, tropical rain forest, he recorded the exotic and incredible.

A favorite of St. Louis audiences, Mr. Hall of Northfield, Minnesota, formerly headed the Department of Photography at Carleton College. His lifelong interest in natural history has been combined since 1935 with the practice of photography as both art and science. He also spent several years of technical work in electronic engineering with the Air Force.

In 1940 he headed an expedition to the Wind River Mountains of Wyoming and was one of the leaders of an expedition into the hitherto unexplored Dark Canyon in Utah. In 1947 Mr. Hall and his wife were commissioned to make an official film of Mesa Verde, Colorado. He has also photographed the Magdalen Islands in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, for many years the wildlife of Mexico and pioneer documentaries of the Hawaiian Islands.

SPRING BIRD WALKS OF THE AUDUBON SOCIETY

Bird walks begin in Forest Park on the last two Sundays in April — the 17th and the 24th — followed by Sunday, May 8th and Sunday, May 15th. Meeting place, as always, Jefferson Memorial, time: 7:30 a. m. Chairman of bird walks: Martin Schweig, Jr. For information, call Martin, FO. 1-4226.

Due to conflict of dates, the Arboretum Field Trip, which usually falls on the last Sunday in the month, or in this case, the 24th, is cancelled because of the Forest Park bird treks.

For beginners: two bird walks are scheduled, as usual, in Shaw's Garden, under the direction of Wally George. Dates: April 23rd and May 7th. Meet at Main Gate, Tower Grove entrance; time — 8:00 a.m. For additional information please call Audubon Society: FO 7-1404 or Mr. Earl Hath after 6:00 p. m. — YO 5-8642.

BUZZARD DAY AT HINCKLEY

To most people the turkey vulture means death and bones picked clean, but to the residents of Hinckley, Ohio, these big, black birds with the naked heads and peculiar appetites mean the return of spring, hotcakes and sausage, bargains in the stores and dancing in the street.

All of this, according to the National Audubon Society, because a flock of vultures, commonly known as "buzzards," make their nests and rear their young each year on rocky ledges overlooking Hinckley Lake. And each year since memory grows dim, the big birds are said to return to the rookery on exactly the same day, March 15. They perch in trees atop the ledges, hang their heads and stare expectantly with baleful eyes at all local creatures.

Refusing to be intimidated, however, the Hinckleyites have made the return of the buzzards an occasion for celebration. Visitors come from miles around to stare back at the vultures while assuaging their own appetites with flapjacks and sausage served by the local Chamber of Commerce. The merchants run special events and for all it is a day of festival and fun.

Last year on Buzzard Day, the Cleveland Plain Dealer reported, the hotcake emporium nearly ran out of sausage twice. Some 25,000 buzzard watchers and 70 buzzards showed up and a woman fell off the ledges and broke her leg.

Anyone Want to Share Ride to August Maine Camp?

Letter from J. W. Galbreath, Executive Secretary, The Cahokia Nature League, 9405 Richfield Road, East St. Louis, Ill.:

We have a couple who want to go to Maine Audubon Camp August 1 - 14 or August 15 - 28. We need a couple, 2 men or man and wife, who wish to go along and share expense of car. As reservations have to be in soon, will you make inquiry of your members and let me know as soon as possible.

THE CASUAL BIRDWATCHER: SUGGESTIONS FOR A PROGRAM

F. WELLINGTON SCOTT

Sometimes the all-out-red-hot birders forget how many people are just casual bird lookers. These are the people who love Nature, but do not care to embrace her too closely. They love birds, but see little sense in carrying to extreme lengths the building of a "Life List". Every hobby has its competitions, and certainly the patient building of a list of birds seen in a lifetime is as reasonable a competition as can be found. But for each such ardent birder there must be dozens who just don't give a hoot. One look at any Screen Tour audience will bear this out. It would appear that by giving a little more attention to these casual admirers, the Society might increase the interest of many of them, to the benefit of all.

One of my own chief interests in Nature is that of photography. And I know how very difficult it is to make a definite photograph of a wild bird. But I also know that the National Society has a collection of good bird slides, and that they are available. Might it not be profitable to consider augmenting the Screen Tour programs with a few "local interest" programs, making use of slides from National Headquarters?

The Screen Tours present a variety of subjects, and they bring in people with a variety of interests. If the attention of those audiences could be focused more closely on local activity, by means of one or two programs each season, the local Society might benefit. There is a point at which the interest of any individual can be captured. Sometimes it is when they discover that there is more than one kind of sparrow. Sometimes it is when they rescue a baby bird from a cat. I have watched people with no interest in birds become fascinated, watching the heroic efforts of a grackle with a crippled wing to climb the trunk of a tree in order to reach a feeder. And others gape in amazement when told "that little sparrow with the spots on its cheeks is found only here near St. Louis".

I have also watched such people put up feeding stations, buy guides and binoculars, and become "bird lookers". At this point only a little nudge might move many of them into the category of "birders". Perhaps a few local interest programs, sandwiched into the Screen Tour Program, might help to accomplish this. For every friend who might be enticed into a Field Trip (it might rain!), there should be many who would accept an invitation to an indoor program.

ST. LOUIS AUDUBON SOCIETY

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

J. EARL COMFORT

January 2, 1960.

Portage Des Sioux, Missouri, along the Mississippi River within a 7½ mile radius, all on Missouri side, approximately the same terrain as last year. Bottomlands and sloughs 71%, untilled weed-grown fields 6%, tilled fields 21%, shallow marshes 2%. January 2, 1960, 8:15 a. m. to 4:30 p. m., cloudy, intermittent light rain; temperature 48 to 53 degrees; wind SSE, 6-8 miles per hour; water open, ground unfrozen. There were 21 observers in one party. Total party hours: 8¼; 6¾ on foot, 1½ by car; total party miles 18½; 4¼ on foot, 14½ by car.

2	Great Blue Heron	2	Blue Jay
21	Canada Goose	83	Crow
1	Snow Goose	6	Black-capped Chickadee
16	Blue Goose	1	White-breasted Nuthatch
3876	Mallard	5	Tufted Titmouse
8	Black Duck	1	Brown Creeper
21	Pintail	2	Carolina Wren
5	Ring-necked Duck	27	Robin
6	Red-tailed Hawk	1	Golden-crowned Kinglet
1	Red-shouldered Hawk	6	Cedar Waxwing
1	Rough-legged Hawk	1	Mockingbird
2	Marsh Hawk	1	Loggerhead Shrike
3	Sparrow Hawk	363	Starling
1	Bobwhite	8	European Tree Sparrow
1	Ring-necked Pheasant	271	House Sparrow
3	Coot	1	Western Meadowlark
2	Bald Eagle	65	Eastern Meadowlark
89	Mourning Dove	63	Red-winged Blackbird
1	Belted Kingfisher	12	Cardinal
23	Yellow-shafted Flicker	5	American Goldfinch
1	Pileated Woodpecker	1	Savannah Sparrow
6	Red-bellied Woodpecker	16	Slate-colored Junco
1	Red-headed Woodpecker	132	Tree Sparrow
3	Hairy Woodpecker	2	Swamp Sparrow
5	Downy Woodpecker	1	Song Sparrow
37	Ring-billed Gull	5	Lapland Longspur
33	Horned Lark		

Total species 53; total individuals about 5,253. Additional subspecies: 1 Krider's Red-tailed Hawk and 1 Northern Horned Lark. Observers: Sam Alfend, Dick Anderson, J. Lee Bess, Alberta Bolinger, George Cameron, Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Carter, Earl Hath, Walter George, John Gilland, Robert Hanselmann, Steve Hanselmann, John McDonald, Mr. and Mrs. Joel Massie, R. C. Quade, Joe Stumpf, Mr. and Mrs. Dick Vasse, Dorothea Vogel and Earl Comfort, compiler, for St. Louis Audubon Society.



BY J. EARL COMFORT

Winter outdoor activity during the present season netted St. Louis area listers very few rare bird species, the most exciting finds being a Horned Grebe, a Whitewinged Scoter and an Old Squaw Duck on the Mississippi River above Alton, Illinois, all in the month of February.

Our last Sunday-of-the-month Nature hike scheduled at Shaw's Garden Arboretum, Gray's Summit, Missouri, by the St. Louis Audubon Society for January yielded its usual wintering Red-breasted Nuthatches, a species that is hard to find elsewhere in our region. The cones of the many evergreens of the Garden entice these tiny birds as well as an occasional Crossbill.

This is a brief review of the year 1959 for our area: There were 266 species acceptably identified as against 260 for the preceding year within our 50-mile radius. Proud listers who figured in our six best year listings were Dick Anderson, Alberta Bolinger, Earl Comfort, Earl Hath, Dorothy Vogel, Dick and Sally Vasse, and Eugene and Diane Wilhelm. The six rarest listings were Black Vulture, Chestnut-collared Longspur, Common Scoter, Sandhill Crane, Cinnamon Teal and Bohemian Waxwing. Other rare species logged were Common Loon, Eared Grebe, Snowy Egret, Yellow-crowned Night Heron, Least Bittern, Greater Scaup Duck, Oldsquaw Duck, Goshawk, Harlan's Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, Peregrine Falcon (Duck Hawk), Pigeon Hawk, Willet, Sanderling, Turnstone, Glaucous Gull, Long-eared Owl, Red-shafted Flicker, Sprague's Pipit, Philadelphia Vireo, Cape May Warbler, Redpoll and Red Crossbill.

There were nine hard working compilers who made the "200 Club" by checking off the required number. Only six tabulated the required total the previous year. Some of the 200 listers of '59 were the same persons who figured in the six best birds, namely, Anderson, Bolinger, Comfort, Hath, Vogel, and Eugene Wilhelm, Jr. Dick Anderson led the group with a high of 257 species. Wally George and Harold Stiles were initiated into the "200 Society" as newcomers. Jack Van Benthuisen was back on the coveted list.

THE WISE OLD OWL

Did you know that owls start incubating their eggs as soon as the first one is laid? As a result the young owls in a nest may vary in age from several days to a week. Roland C. Clement, ecologist on the staff of the National Audubon Society, believes this is a built-in regulator provided by nature to keep owl numbers in balance with their food supply. The younger and smaller chicks have difficulty competing with their older nest-mates for food brought by the parent birds. In years when mice and other prey species are abundant, even the runts get fed, but in lean years the younger birds perish.

SCREEN TOURS REACH PEAK IN FLORIDA

The appeal of nature and the out-of-doors to modern Americans, even by vicarious experience, was demonstrated by a crowd of 1,900 that turned out one recent night in St. Petersburg, Florida, to hear an illustrated talk by Olin S. Pettingill, naturalist on the lecture staff of the National Audubon Society. Before the 1959-60 season has ended, an estimated half a million persons will have attended 1,500 appearances by the thirty-five lecturers engaged in the current Audubon Screen Tour series.

IVORY-BILLED WOODPECKER NEWS!

We received this letter which we thought would interest our readers: Mr. Jokerst is well qualified, having helped Dr. Rudolph Bennett compile the check list for the birds of Missouri.

"Mr. Earl Hath:

"On a recent trip (Feb. 21 to 29) home from New Orleans, my wife and I had occasion to travel back to St. Louis on the western side of the Mississippi. On Louisiana Hwy. No. 65 from Fariday to Tallulah, Louisiana, we turned left on a timber road into the heart of the famous Singer Game preserve. About 8 miles into this magnificent virgin swamp forest we ran into a crew cutting and taking out large gum, pecan and hickory logs. We stopped and passed the time with the superintendent of this crew and were amazed to learn that this gentleman had killed an Ivory Billed Woodpecker just 2 weeks before. On cross-questioning him repeatedly he insisted the bird had an ivory bill and white on the back. His local name for this bird was "Rain Crow". He said they have the large and small variety, i.e. Pileated. He said that he had killed the bird in a tract of virgin swamp timber that the loggers could not get into to cut.

Sincerely,
J. Dent Jokerst"

FOURTH ANNUAL MEETING

MISSOURI CHAPTER OF THE NATURE CONSERVANCY

April 30 - May 1, 1960

The speaker Saturday night, April 30, at the annual dinner will be Dr. Olas Murie of Moose, Wyoming, outstanding conservationist of the country. For details check with Joel Massie, WY 3-4926.

Anyone who is interested in "Pesticides: The Real Peril" by Robert L. Rudd may obtain copies from The Desert Protective Council, P.O. Box 716, Banning, California.

AUDUBON SOCIETY ADDS NEW WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

The Richardson Bay Wildlife Sanctuary in Marin County, California, is the latest addition to the nationwide chain of wildlife reservations operated by the National Audubon Society.

The Richardson Bay area, near the city of Belvedere, is 585 acres of tidelands and marsh heavily used by waterfowl and shorebirds. Its acquisition was completed in 1959 through the assistance of private contributors and the cooperation of State, county and municipal agencies. Title was then transferred to the county and city, which in turn granted the Society a 50-year lease to maintain the area as a sanctuary.

The National Audubon Society, a non-government conservation organization with headquarters at 1130 Fifth Avenue in New York City, now maintains more than thirty separate wildlife areas ranging in size from tiny off-shore islands that serve as nesting sites for seabird rookeries, to the 26,000-acre Rainey Memorial Sanctuary in Louisiana, a major refuge for wintering waterfowl. Audubon wardens assigned to these areas patrol more than a million acres of land and water in their protection of wildlife.

GOURMET NOTE

Nature made the best mousetraps! A pair of great horned owls may devour and feed to their young as many as 8,250 mice in the course of a year, according to biological studies made of this powerful night-flying hunter.

ST. LOUIS AUDUBON BULLETIN

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The St. Louis Audubon Society

Earl H. Hath.....President

Miss Alberta Bolinger.....Executive Secretary

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